



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 16 March 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
16 MARCH 1967

1. Vietnam

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2. South Vietnam

General Chieu, the Directorate's chief negotiator with the Constituent Assembly, reports the military are unwilling to go along with the assembly's proposal that it serve as an interim legislature. However, the Directorate is amenable to extending the life of the assembly so it can draft electoral decrees and help monitor the forthcoming elections.

The Directorate, according to Chieu, thinks it should retain its legislative as well as its executive powers until both the new legislature and the president are elected. He says the two elections will be held as soon and close together as possible.

Chieu claimed that the Directorate was ready to defer to the assembly view on most other differences. He and Ambassador Bui Diem think final agreement is close at hand. The assembly, however, may stall until after the return of the many government officials planning to attend the Guam conference.

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3. India

Mrs. Gandhi's new government is, as she said it would be, a combination of old stalwarts and new blood. We do not expect any major shifts in government policies.

The wide spread of ideological positions within the leadership could cause problems as Mrs. Gandhi again comes to grips with the country's truly appalling domestic problems. Also, much will depend on the ability of Mrs. Gandhi and Deputy Prime Minister Desai to bury the hatchet. But Ambassador Bowles is moderately optimistic.

4. Tunisia

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5. West Germany

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6. France

Officials in Paris are assuring [redacted] that Sunday's referendum in French Somaliland will go heavily in favor of continued French rule. [redacted]

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This may be so, but it will not solve France's problems there. The referendum campaign has sharpened tensions among the diverse peoples of the Colony. A pro-France vote is almost sure to set off riots among the Somalis, who are a minority, and among their kin in the Somali Republic.

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A vote for independence would probably bring war between Somalia and Ethiopia. The Somalis want Somaliland; the Ethiopians will not put up with Somali control of their access to the sea. Somalia has moved troops close to the border [redacted]

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7. Cuba

The US press has failed to capture the full fervor of Fidel Castro's blast on Monday night against Moscow's policies in Latin America. Never before has Castro been so direct on this issue in a public speech.

Referring to recent Soviet efforts to cozy up to such "oligarchic and treacherous" governments as those in Colombia and Venezuela, Castro charged that this amounts to helping those governments "repress the revolution."

Castro also castigated pro-Moscow Latin American Communist parties for betraying the revolutionary struggle. He praised the Venezuelan guerrillas, implying that he would continue supporting them. The speech surely must be the last shovelful of dirt thrown on the Moscow-inspired agreement of November 1964 to work only through the official Latin American Communist parties.

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